

Christ Church CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123471
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314605
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Robinson
Headteacher	Jill Watt
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2003
School address	Sheinton Road Cressage Shrewsbury SY5 6DH
Telephone number	01952 510383
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Christ Church CofE Primary School serves Cressage and a number of other local villages. The school serves pockets of rural deprivation. The school is much smaller than most primary schools and the number of pupils has been falling over recent years. Nearly all pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. A small proportion of pupils come from Traveller communities. About a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties or dyslexia. This proportion is above that usually found in primary schools and there are almost twice as many pupils with a statement of special educational needs as found nationally. A small number of pupils leave the school in Years 3, 4 or 5 to go to private education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. Improvements to provision and results are taking effect and there is a confident and well focused approach to raising standards. Whilst much of what the school does is judged as satisfactory, including pupils' achievement, teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management, there are good features, notably pupils' personal development and care, guidance and support. The headteacher gives a very strong lead to the school, has high expectations and is very honest about the school's performance. This effective steer from the top is proving successful in guiding other staff to make the necessary changes so pupils have even better chances of success.

Over recent years standards have been broadly average at the end of Year 6. In 2007 standards in writing and science were not as high as those in reading and mathematics. Action has been taken that has proved successful in raising standards and some high quality writing is evident in pupils' books.. Results in science have not improved, and the school is aware that the lack of enrichment to the curriculum and unadventurous teaching are holding back achievement in the subject. In general pupils make satisfactory progress from starting points in Reception that are broadly as expected for their age. The careful small step approach to work for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means they make good progress. Pupils from Traveller communities also progress well because the school works in very successful partnership with their parents and carers and with the regional support service.

Pupils behave well and learning is settled and well regulated. A very small number of boys sometimes present very challenging behaviour which is managed successfully. Occasionally, such pupils are temporarily excluded from school. Despite this, if poor behaviour takes place it does not affect the work of other pupils. Attendance rates are below average, although most of it is due to a few pupils who take holidays in term time.. Pupils' awareness of health and safety matters is sharp and they have an outstanding involvement in the local community. Their views are influential in the improvements made for the benefit of the school community. Pupils are prepared soundly for the next stage in their education and life beyond school.

School leaders are vigilant in ensuring all pupils are safeguarded well. The effective partnership with parents and other agencies is particularly useful in ensuring the well-being of the pupils. Parents identify the warm, family ethos in school as one of its chief assets. The school has introduced a new system of sharing targets with pupils that is the basis of satisfactory educational guidance, although the system is not yet implemented consistently in all classes or in English, mathematics and science.

School self-evaluation is accurate and gives the staff the information to ensure improvement is aimed where it is needed. On the basis of this and the improvements made so far, the school has the capacity to take the next steps in raising standards and achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The children in Reception are happy and well behaved learners, whose personal, social and emotional development is good. They build skills and knowledge at a satisfactory rate and at the end of Reception their standards are broadly average. Foundation Stage children are taught with Year 1 pupils in the morning and are joined by Year 2 as well in the afternoon. Whilst the themes introduced are the same for all three age groups, the work for Reception children is

suitably based on the guidelines for the Foundation Stage curriculum. It includes an appropriate mix of adult led work and independent exploration and investigation. Teaching quality is satisfactory and school leaders are working soundly to ensure the quality of education for these youngest children is maintained during the current period of significant change to staffing in Reception and Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that the curriculum and teaching for science are adventurous and stimulating in order to raise achievement.
- Develop the target sharing system so that it is of equal good quality in all classes and the three core subjects.
- Work with parents to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2007, standards were above average at the end of Year 2. Attainment in mathematics is strong. Standards in Year 2 writing were only just above average in 2007 because fewer pupils reached the higher Level 3 than in primary schools nationally. School leaders have addressed the weaker results in writing with considerable success and the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 has tripled this year.

In Year 6, the 2007 test results in English and mathematics were broadly average, although in science they were below the national figure. Whilst an above average proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English, the same was not true for science, where the percentage was below the national average. This year, standards have risen in English, largely due to the good improvement of writing, and almost half of the pupils in Year 6 are likely to reach Level 5. Mathematics and science standards are similar in the current Year 6 to those reached last year.

The school's results at the end of Year 6 are often affected by the number of pupils of academic promise who leave the school for private education partway through Key Stage 2. Tracking data show most of these pupils were reaching above average standards at the time they left the school.

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The challenge for more able pupils has been sharpened successfully this year and they are now making similar progress to most other pupils. Where the school is particularly successful, due to the careful planning of work to meet specific needs, pupils achieve well. So, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and most pupils from Traveller communities do well. The progress of pupils who take holidays in term time is slowed because they miss key parts of the work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils take care of each other and who are proud of each other's achievements. This good personal development starts in the Foundation Stage, where the children's personal, social and

emotional life is fostered well. Pupils' enjoyment of school is obvious and they have good ideas to help improve what it does. These ideas are followed up whenever possible and range from colour schemes in the classrooms to suggestions for additional out of school events and clubs. Pupils are given a good deal of responsibility, which they take seriously. They work well in teams, act sensibly and maturely when required to show independence, and are not lacking in initiative. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent and their cultural development is good.

Pupils' sporting lives are very full. There is an outstanding range of sports clubs, competitions and coaching sessions. The school's success rate is very high and some gymnasts perform to national standards. All this makes a strong contribution to their healthy lifestyles. The pupils host the annual Cressage Cup sports event, which is valuable experience that contributes to their excellent involvement in the community. Pupils are also very aware of the risks posed by sports such as rugby and football and when travelling by the school bus or cycling through the village. They have excellent knowledge of the precautions to take to keep safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation of teaching is rigorous and accurate and has identified a number of areas where teaching and learning can be improved, for example in science. Most teaching is in mixed age classes, and is generally successful in meeting learners' needs. Where additional care has been taken to ensure the work is closely matched to specific needs, teaching is even more successful and pupils' progress is good. Progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is the prime example of this. The effective team of teaching assistants plays a key role in fostering these pupils' good achievement.

There is evidence of some outstanding teaching, including in science for the oldest pupils. The prime reason for the outstanding teaching is the high expectation held of all pupils which is reflected in lesson planning that identifies specific targets for each ability group. However such planning is not yet widespread enough. In a few lessons pupils are asked to talk about their own progress towards their targets and in their writing books the quality of marking is very good. In science books, marking is less helpful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for English, mathematics and science ensures that pupils develop the necessary basic skills. In English, the curriculum is good because the school has made significant changes to the development of writing which are leading to improved achievement. The science curriculum does not have the same quality and much work is based on the completion of the same worksheets by all pupils, regardless of ability. There are moments when science work becomes richer and more motivating, as seen when the mixed age Years 5/6 class experimented to see whether they could match the world record for paper aeroplane flight. The pupils' awareness of wind resistance and aerodynamics increased in relation to the ever greater distance covered at each attempt. The mathematics curriculum is satisfactory though improving.

Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory and pupils have appropriate skills in the subject. The school has a well founded reputation for its work in arts subjects, with some excellent artwork on display and a high take-up of specialist music tuition.

Pupils benefit from the very wide range of out of school activities which is available to pupils of all ages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works well with outside agencies in maintaining vigilance over the safeguarding of pupils. Staff give good advice to pupils and anyone with troubles or worries always has someone to talk to. The pupils know who to turn to in such situations and are confident they will get a good hearing and that the follow-up will be swift. There is great trust between pupils and adults.

Academic progress is monitored carefully and pupils are helped to reach their individual targets. This process is most successful in English because of the excellence of the target sharing process. Mathematics guidance is based on a similar system but achievement in science is less well charted or shared.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of her focus on achievement. She works from the principle that pupils' progress can always be bettered. Other staff are increasingly sharing this outlook. The management of subjects is satisfactory, as is the leadership of the Foundation Stage. The school's targets for achievement are now more challenging in English and mathematics, and this is showing through in pupils' improved achievement. This is not yet the case in science.

Governors are keen to become even more involved in the leadership and management of the school. They take a suitably questioning stance on changes designed to bring improvement, although this is more marked for areas outside the key priorities of improvements to achievement. Governors are well led and are active in all aspects of school life.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Christ Church CofE Primary School, Cressage SY5 6DH

I will remember my visit to your school for a long time. This is because you were welcoming and friendly and shared your thoughts and ideas about your school honestly and clearly. I think you have a satisfactory education and that it is improving day by day. This is especially true of your progress in writing.

I hope many of you will read my full report. I have written about the key things I found.

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards.
- You are well behaved, enjoy your learning and have an excellent understanding of the need to keep healthy and safe.
- Children in Reception develop the necessary skills and knowledge for their age.
- You are taught satisfactorily most of the time but occasionally your lessons are particularly good.
- The staff look after you well.
- Mrs Watt makes sure the staff and governors focus their work on improving your progress.

The staff know what needs improvement. I have listed three things that will help to make your school even more successful.

- Improve what you learn in science by making the work more challenging, interesting and practical.
- Give you more opportunities to think and talk about how well you are meeting your targets.
- Work with some parents to cut the number of holidays taken in school weeks.

I know you will have some good ideas to share with your teachers about these improvements. You can all help by making sure you come to school whenever you are fit.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

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Lead inspector